

March 10, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. In the context of severe shortages of crude oil and natural gas due to the West Asian war situation, there has been a severe shortage of commercial LPG cylinders in various states including Tamil Nadu. The supply of commercial LPG cylinders has been stopped in various places.

(i) The Central Government has taken various emergency measures, including restricting the booking of domestic LPG cylinders, to avoid shortages. The decisions in this regard were taken at a high-level review meeting held in Delhi under the chairmanship of Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri. Central government officials said in this regard:

- LPG cylinder bookings, which were allowed at intervals of 21 days, have now been increased to 25 days. Accordingly, the next booking can now be made only after 25 days of the cylinder being distributed.
- All public sector oil outlets have been asked to ensure that they distribute only domestic LPG cylinders.

(ii) Reports have emerged of shortages of LPG, petrol and diesel in various states including Bihar, Maharashtra, Punjab and Karnataka.

(iii) The Central Government has advised public sector oil companies including Indian Oil (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum not to increase the retail prices of petrol and diesel. Specifically, the Central Government has asked oil companies not to change prices until the price of crude oil in the international market does not exceed \$ 130 per barrel; the current temporary loss should be borne. Therefore, the retail prices of petrol and diesel are unlikely to be increased immediately.

2. The Tamil Nadu Electricity Board has requested the Central Power Department to provide electricity generated by Kudankulam 3 and 4 nuclear reactors to Tamil Nadu at a lower price.

(i) The nuclear power plant operating in Kudankulam, Tirunelveli district, is generating electricity in two units with a capacity of 1,000 MW each. Out of this, 1,152 MW is allocated to Tamil Nadu daily and the rest of the electricity is allocated to other states. Accordingly, the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board is purchasing electricity at an average rate of Rs.5.40 per unit.

(ii) Meanwhile, nuclear reactors 3 and 4 are being set up at the Kudankulam nuclear power plant with a capacity of 1,000 MW each. The Central Government has announced that it will sell the electricity generated in them to Tamil Nadu at a rate of Rs.5.91 per unit.

(iii) In this regard, some officials of the Electricity Board said:

- Electricity generated by the renewable energy sector and stored in batteries is available to the Electricity Board at Rs. 4 per unit. Due to this, it is not possible to purchase electricity from the Kudankulam power plant at a higher price.
- The central government was ready to supply electricity generated by the Kakrabar nuclear power plant in Gujarat to the state at Rs.5.60 per unit. However, after the state government requested to reduce the price, the central government is supplying it at Rs.4.50 per unit.
- Similarly, they said that a request has been made to the Southern State Electricity Committee of the Central Power Department, urging them to provide electricity from Kudankulam 3 and 4 nuclear reactors to Tamil Nadu at a lower price.



3. Mojtaba Khamenei (56), son of the late Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has been officially elected to the post of Supreme Leader of Iran, the most powerful position in the Islamic Republic.

(i) On Feb. 28, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in a joint US-Israeli strike. Following this, the country's 'Assembly of Experts', consisting of 88 senior clerics, met on Monday and declared Mojtaba Khamenei as the new Supreme Leader.

(ii) Although Mojtaba Khamenei has not been seen in public much, he has close ties to Iran's powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Despite criticism of succession politics, the council believes that Mojtaba Khamenei is the right person to counter the dominance of the US and Israel in the current war environment.

4. In view of the regional war situation and the serious Israeli attacks, a resolution was passed extending the term of the Lebanese Parliament for another 2 years.

(i) In a vote held in the Lebanese Parliament, 76 members voted in favor of the resolution and 41 voted against. 13 Members of Parliament from Hezbollah also supported the extension.

(ii) Hezbollah launched a missile attack on Israel in support of Iran. Following this, the Israeli army intensified ground attacks in the Lebanese border areas and is targeting Hezbollah.

(iii) Opposition to Israel's chemical weapons:

- Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch accused the Israeli army of using 'White Phosphorus' shells in an unlawful attack on residential areas in southern Lebanon.
- The organization expressed concern that an examination of photographs related to the attack in the village of Yomor confirmed that this dangerous chemical weapon was used in the settlements where the Meksan live, in violation of international law.

5. It has been reported that the opposition parties are planning to table a resolution in Parliament soon to remove Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

(i) The SIR issue has resulted in the removal of the names of lakhs of voters from the electoral rolls in several states.

(ii) This has been strongly opposed by states ruled by opposition parties, including West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. With the assembly elections about to be held, the Trinamool Congress, which rules West Bengal, is accusing the BJP and the Election Commission of deliberately deleting the names of voters.

(iii) In this context, new information has emerged that the opposition parties are planning to table a resolution in Parliament soon to remove Gyanesh Kumar from the post of Chief Election Commissioner. The sources say that a draft for the removal has been prepared and it is likely to be tabled this week.

6. Prime Minister Modi is set to lay the foundation stones for various projects worth a total of Rs.16,450 crore in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and inaugurate completed projects on Wednesday (March 11). A press release issued by the Prime Minister's Office in this regard said:

(i) Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to visit Kerala and Tamil Nadu on Wednesday. He will lay the foundation stone for new development projects worth around Rs.5,650 crore in Trichy and inaugurate completed development projects.



(ii) This includes projects in key sectors including petroleum and natural gas infrastructure, road connectivity, rail services.

(iii) He will lay the foundation stone for the Bharat Petroleum Corporation's natural gas pipeline project in the Nilgiris and Erode districts, with an investment of over Rs.3,680 crore. Through this project, natural gas will be supplied through pipelines to over 8.8 lakh households.

(iv) Prime Minister Modi will dedicate to the nation the lubricant blending plant, which was completed at an investment of about Rs. 1,490 crores in Chennai Manali. This plant will strengthen India's lubricant manufacturing capacity.

(v) Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate 89 rural roads spanning 370 km in Tamil Nadu and lay the foundation stone for the construction of a greenfield bypass near Gangaikonda Cholapuram on National Highway 81.

(vi) He is scheduled to launch 2 Amrut Bharat Express trains, 2 express trains and a passenger train service to strengthen rail connectivity between Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Eastern India.

(vii) It is reported that Prime Minister Modi will lay the foundation stone of various projects worth a total of Rs.16,450 crore in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and inaugurate completed projects.

7. Child marriage – prevailing situation in India and Tamil Nadu :-

(i) Global and National Context

- More than 40% of the world's child marriages are reported to take place in India.
- Between 1992-93 and 2005-06, child marriages in India saw a decrease of approximately 7%.
- Among women currently aged 20 to 24, roughly 47% were married before the age of 18.
- Several states, including Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh, still report child marriage rates exceeding 60%.
- The issue remains significantly more severe in rural India compared to urban centers.

(ii) Tamil Nadu Specific Data

- In the last three years, Tamil Nadu has recorded approximately 7,000 child marriages.
- Data from the Right to Information Act indicates that child marriages in the state increased by 55% over a single year.
- Between January and November 2024, the state recorded 1,640 child marriages, a significant rise from the 1,054 cases recorded in the full year of 2023.
- Western districts of Tamil Nadu are particularly affected, accounting for six of the top ten districts with the highest rates.
- District-wise Breakdown (2023):
 - Erode: 150 cases.
 - Coimbatore: 90 cases.
 - Namakkal: 74 cases.
 - Tiruppur: 66 cases.
 - Dharmapuri: 58 cases.
 - Salem: 51 cases.
- Recent Intervention Data (Jan-Nov 2024):



- In Coimbatore, out of 125 complaints, only 35 marriages were stopped, while 90 were completed.
- In Erode, out of 186 complaints, only 36 were successfully prevented.
- Other high-complaint districts include Dharmapuri (157), Dindigul (165), and Cuddalore (131).

(iii) Legal Framework and Implementation

- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006) sets the legal marriage age at 18 for women and 21 for men.
- District Social Welfare Officers serve as Child Marriage Prohibition Officers, though they are often burdened with additional administrative duties.
- Village-level committees led by Panchayat presidents are also tasked with preventing these marriages.
- Authorities also utilize the POCSO Act to prosecute those involved in child marriages.
- Citizens are encouraged to report cases via the Women's Helpline (181) or the emergency number (100).

(iv) Causes and Social Factors

- There is a direct link between educational attainment and marriage age:
 - No education: 77% married before 18.
 - Primary/Secondary education: 62% married before 18.
 - Higher education: The rate drops significantly to 27%.
- High school dropout rates are identified as a primary catalyst for early marriages.
- Many completion cases only come to light when young girls are admitted to hospitals for childbirth.

(v) Impacts and Awareness

- Child marriage is noted for causing severe physical and mental health issues for young girls.
- The Tamil Nadu Government conducts awareness programs through street plays, puppet shows, rallies, and seminars to educate the public on the dangers of the practice.

8. Renaming of Kerala as Keralam :-

(i) Renaming Process and Approval

- On February 24, 2026, the Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, approved the proposal to change the state's name from "Kerala" to "Keralam".
- The Kerala State Assembly first passed a resolution for the name change on August 9, 2023, under Rule 118. After the Central Government returned it for corrections, the resolution was passed a second time on June 24, 2024.
- To finalize the change across all official records and languages in the Eighth Schedule, an amendment bill must be introduced in Parliament under Article 3 of the Constitution.
- The resolution seeks to ensure the state is referred to as "Keralam" in all languages, aligning with its name in Malayalam.

(ii) Etymology and Historical Context



- In Malayalam, "Kera" refers to the coconut tree and "Alam" means land, together meaning "Land of Coconut trees".
- Some scholars suggest the name originates from "Chera" and "Alam," indicating the land of the Cheras or land reclaimed from the sea.
- The term "Kerala" is identified as a colonial-era misspelling. British officials often altered local names ending in "m" or "n" because they found them difficult to pronounce.
- The state was officially formed on November 1, 1956, following the States Reorganisation Act, which merged Malayalam-speaking regions. This day is celebrated by locals as "Kerala Piravi".

(iii) Linguistic and Cultural Perspectives

- The change is viewed as a significant step in reclaiming the state's linguistic and traditional identity that has been championed since the independence movement.
- In response to queries about whether residents would be called "Keralamites," linguistic experts clarified that residents will likely continue to be known as "Keralites".

(iv) Comparison with Other States

- Several other Indian states that have undergone name changes since independence:
 - United Provinces became Uttar Pradesh (1950).
 - Madras became Tamil Nadu (1969).
 - Mysore became Karnataka (1973).
 - Uttaranchal became Uttarakhand (2007).
 - Orissa became Odisha (2011).
- West Bengal's request to change its name to "Bangla" (proposed in 2016) remains pending with the Central Government.